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PAGE 01 STATE 235853

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TAGS: ELAB, ENRG

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN LABOR LEADERS VISIT AFL-CIO TO

DISCUSS PETROLEUM AND FUTURE OF ORIT

REF: STATE A-1942

1. MEETINGS BETWEEN VENEZUELAN AND AFL-CIO LEADERS TOOK PLACE IN WASHINGTON OCTOBER 15-16, 1974. THE MEETINGS WERE REQUESTED BY THE VENEZUELAN TO DISCUSS GOV PETROLEUM POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF ORIT (INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION).

2. THE VENEZUELAN, LED BY AUGUSTO MALAVE VILLALBA, WERE SEEN BY AFL-CIO PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY, SECRETARY TREASURER LANE KIRKLAND, AND INTER-AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW MCLELLAN.

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PAGE 02 STATE 235853

3. ON PETROLEUM SIDE VENEZUELAN PRESENTED MEMORANDUM ON GOV PETROLEUM POLICY WHICH MCLALLAN DESCRIBED AS VERY WELL DOCUMENTED AND CONVINCING. VENEZUELAN SAID PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO ASSURE AFL-CIO UNDERSTANDING OF VENEZUELA POSITION. IF THEY HOPED FOR PUBLIC STATEMENT OF SUPPORT THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED, ALTHOUGH LANE KIRKLAND IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THEM AFL-CIO DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND ARAB OPEC COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF US-VENEZUELAN TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP AND DEMOCRACY.

4. ON ORIT SIDE VENEZUELAN SUGGESTED, AS THEY HAVE BEFORE, THAT ORIT OUGHT TO BE DISSOLVED AND A NEW ORGANIZATION, WITH HEADQUARTERS IN CARACAS, TAKE ITS PLACE. AFL-CIO RESPONSE WAS ESSENTIALLY THAT THIS WAS A MATTER FOR LATIN AMERICANS TO DECIDE. MCLELLAN ADVISED VENEZUELAN TO CONSULT WITH OTHER ORIT AFFILIATES AND COME UP WITH CONCRETE PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION BY

ORIT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN JANUARY 1975. HE SAID AFL-CIO WOULD INSIST ON FULL PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING ORIT FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS (LARGELY IN FORM OF SEPARATION PAY FOR ORIT STAFF), AND ON REASONABLE GUARANTEES OF ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT BY LATINS OF ANY NEW ORGANIZATION. STATUS OF ANY NEW ORGANIZATION VIS-A-VIS ICFTU WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, SINCE AFL-CIO IS NOT MEMBER OF ICFTU AND HAS BEEN ABLE TO REMAIN IN ORIT, AN ICFTU REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, ONLY ON BASIS OF TECHNICALITY.

5. ANOTHER PROBLEM TO BE CONSIDERED IS THAT OF MOVING HEADQUARTERS OF ORIT OR NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FROM MEXICO. MEXICO WOULD PROBABLY RESIST SUCH A MOVE AND AFL-CIO DOES NOT WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN CONTROVERSY BETWEEN MEXICO AND VENEZUELA ON THIS POINT. ON THE OTHER HAND, ORIT INSTITUTE IN CUERNAVACA IS NOT AN ISSUE AS FAR AS AFL-CIO IS CONCERNED. AFL-CIO ASSUMES INSTITUTE WILL SOONER OR LATER BE TAKEN OVER BY MEXICANS, ASSUMING SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT CAN BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 235853

REACHED WITH ICFTU AND CANADIAN LABOR CONGRESS WHICH MADE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT THERE A FEW YEARS AGO.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH AFL-CIO IS AS MUCH CONCERNED AS ANYONE ABOUT ORIT'S INEFFECTIVENESS, AND PROBABLY SEES ADVANTAGES IN NEW ORGANIZATION (ESPECIALLY IF IT WERE NOT TIED TO ICFTU) IT DOES NOT WANT TO BE PUT IN POSITION OF APPEARING TO KILL ORIT UNILATERALLY. THIS

IT COULD DO, DE FACTO, SIMPLY BY REFUSING TO PAY
AFFILIATION FEES. IN EFFECT, THIS IS WHAT VENEZUELAN
SEEM TO BE SUGGESTING, BUT FOR NOW AT LEAST AFL-CIO
ISN'T BUYING. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF ORIT CONTINUES TO
GO DOWN HILL AND THE LATIN AMERICANS CONTINUE POLICY
OF NON-SUPPORT WITHOUT OFFERING ANY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE,
AFL-CIO MAY EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO TAKE JUST SUCH ACTION.
(FOR BACKGROUND SEE REF AIRGRAM)

7. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY
INFORMATION RELATING TO LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVES TO
ESTABLISH NEW REGIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION. DECONTROL
DECEMBER 31, 1975. INGERSOLL UNQTE INGERSOLL

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